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**Testimony of Connecticut Water Company
Public Health Committee - March 17, 2014
HB 5543 AAC Water Quality**

Connecticut Water is pleased to provide comments in **support** of **HB 5543 AAC Water Quality**. We thank the Public Health Committee for raising this bill, which we believe provides some important tools to streamline processes within the Department of Public Health (DPH) and still maintain critical protections for public health and water quality.

We concur with comments submitted by the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) and their suggested revisions, based on feedback received from other stakeholders. We are eager to work with CWWA, the Committee, and other interested parties to make any necessary changes to the bill to further its adoption.

Section 1 of the bill would provide a streamlined process for approval of 'change in use' permits for activities on water company lands. We recognize and support that such review is important for new activities or any uses that are not consistent with the use of the lands for public water supply purposes. However, we have found over the years that the Department has come to interpret a 'change in use' to mean any time 'a shovel of dirt is moved' on water company lands. That strict interpretation is simply not necessary or appropriate for routine water utility operations or activities consistent with water supply plans. DPH now requires permits for things as simple as on site facility maintenance, relocation of fuel storage to a more protective location, extending power for emergency generators, or even culvert repairs or restoration of eroded soils adjacent to a source of supply. The time required to prepare an application, the level of review and scrutiny for such activities by the Department, and the associated delays are simply not necessary for activities that are routine maintenance of existing water utility operations and facilities or other water supply activities consistent with a water supply plan submitted to the Department.

Section 2 of the bill provides for the creation of a Licensed Water Professional (LWP) to perform certain duties on behalf of the Department of Public Health. We fully support this concept, which is similar to the Licensed Environmental Professional authorized by DEEP. It would reduce the administrative and staffing burdens of DPH and facilitate more timely review of applications or other requests submitted to DPH on behalf of the applicant by a qualified LWP. Particularly, in this time of budget constraints, this is an innovative and cost effective way to carry out provisions of DPH programs. Under existing law, DPH can already delegate its authority to carry out provisions of the statutes on their behalf to outside agents or engineers so this provides another vehicle to accomplish that. CWWA has suggested some language changes for this section that we concur would help further clarify the intent and implementation of the program.

We thank the Committee for raising HB 5543 and ask for your support of the bill. We stand ready to work with members of the Committee, our water industry colleagues, and other stakeholders to revise the language, as appropriate to accomplish the desired goals of the legislation. If you have questions please contact Maureen Westbrook at 1-860-664-6055 or mwestbrook@ctwater.com.